Pakistan has denied that Sheikh Rashid had been running terrorist training camps.

Recruitment of drivers by KGL

*270. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS AND INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the renewed activities of Kuwait and Gulf Link Transport Company of Kuwait to recruit drivers and other categories of workers for Iraq; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to safeguard Indian citizens from being lured into hazardous employment in Iraq?

THE PRIME MINISTER (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH): (a) and (b) :

1. There have been Press reports about M/s. Kuwait and Gulf Link Transport Co., Kuwait (KGL) recruiting truck and trailer drivers for Iraq.

2. KGL had been placed in the Prior Approval Category (PAC) in 2001. It was removed from the PAC list in Nov. 2004 on the recommendation of the Embassy of India, Kuwait.

3. In the wake of recent Press reports about the activities of KGL, all Protectors of Emigrants have been directed not to grant emigration clearance at their level w.e.f. 22.07.2005 to Indian workers proposed to be deployed by KGL but refer the proposals to the Protector General of Emigrants.

4. Further, the practice of a specific endorsement "NOT VALID FOR TRAVEL TO IRAQ" on the passports of workers going to Kuwait and Jordan, has been extended to all workers going to all Gulf countries.

Country among maritime nations

*271. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether despite the long coastline, India is not rated among the top 20 maritime nations; and

(b) if so, the measures that Government would adopt to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir. As per Lloyd's Register Fairplay 'World Fleet Statistics 2004', India stands at 19th rank among the maritime nations in so far as nation's gross tonnage is concerned. The gross tonnage of Indian fleet was 8.11 million GT as on 1.8.2005. The position is still better in terms of DWT, where India's rank is 13th in the world. In terms of supply of seafarers, India has major strength and it ranks 6th in the world.

(b) In order to further improve India's rank as a maritime nation, Government of India has taken the following important measures:

Augmentation of Tonnage

- The Government has announced introduction of tonnage tax from the financial year 2004-05 for the Shipping Industry.
- Dredgers have also been included in the tonnage tax regime from 2005-06.
- The Government of India is in the process of finalizing a comprehensive policy for the Maritime Sector.
- Service tax relaxation has been granted for shipping sector for some of the services taken by them abroad.
- 100% FDI is allowed in shipping sector.

Promotion of Seafaring:

- Private investment in Maritime training institutions has been allowed, resulting in increase in number of trained Indian Seafarers who can be employed on world fleet.

Power target through existing reactor

*272. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that by 2020, India plans to be a nuclear reactor global leader;